THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTERY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) Information is being collected from the States/Union Territories.

(d) The estimated loss of forest wealth of Rs. 2.63 crores has been reported by 28 States and Union Territories due to forest fires from 1991 to 1993.

(e) Since the year, 1992-93 a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme titled "Modern Forest Fire Control Method" to control forest fire with a view to protecting and conserving forests has been started. Under the scheme, State Governments are provided with financial assistance for purchase of items like hand tools, water handling equipments, wireless sets, fire resistant clothing, fire finder instruments, etc. and for construction of watch towers and for implementation of the scheme in areas identified as fire-prone areas. The Scheme covered 11 States including Tamil Nadu and Kerala till 1993-94. From the current financial year, all States and Union Territories are being covered by the scheme.

Pollution in Rivers

5586. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rivers of the country are being polluted greatly;

(b) if so, whether any survey has been undertaken to this effect and if the answer is in the affirmative, the details; thereof and the action taken thereon:

(c) whether the river Yamuna is one such river in Delhi which is heavily polluted; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to check its pollution and to improve its surroundings ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Based on the results of National Water Quality Monitoring data, 37 grossly polluted river stretches have been identified in the country. It has been observed that one of the major sources of pollution in the rivers is the disposal of domestic waste water, followed by industrial wastes.

Government had launched the Ganga Action Plan in 1985 and the Yamuna Action Plan in 1993 to clean the polluted stretches of the rivers Ganga and Yamuna. The Government has also approved National River Action Plan for pollution abatement work in the identified polluted stretches of major rivers of the country including Baitareni, Betwa, Beas, Bhadra, Brahmani, Cauveri, Chambal. Godavari, Kali, Krishna, Khan, Kshipra, Narmada, Sabarmati, Satluj, Subarnarekha, Tunga, Tungahadra, Tapi and Wainganga rivers. The Action Plan would be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on the basis of equal cost sharing of capital works between Centre and the concerned States.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Government has launched the Yamuna action Plan for control and abatement of pollution in Delhi as well as in the river Yamuna. This programme include:

(i) Interception and Diversion of Municipal waste water

(ii) Sewage treatment

(iii) Low cost sanitation

(iv) Improved crematoria

(v) Afforestation along the river banks

(vi) Community participation.